

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2009**

**The monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, March 23, 2009, in the cafeteria of Mt. Hope High School, 199 Chestnut Street in Bristol, RI. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chair, Paul Brule, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:12 PM.**

**Present: Paul E. Brule, Vice-Chair, Marjorie J. McBride, Secretary, William M. O'Dell, Treasurer, Denise R. Arsenault, Diana B. Campbell, Karen A. Lynch and John P. Saviano; Edward P. Mara, Superintendent of Schools; Melinda L. Thies, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction; Jane F. Correia, Director of Administration and Finance; Leslie J. Anderson, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, and Andrew D. Henneous, Esq., District Solicitor**

**Absent: Paul Silva, Chair, and John C. Bento**

**OPENING BUSINESS**

**All present were invited to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.**

**Mr. Brule explained that Mr. Silva is unable to be at the meeting because he is recovering from surgery.**

### **Accolades**

**Under the tutelage of Mt. Hope teacher Ryan Garrity, the Mt. Hope High School Engineering and Robotics Club participated at the RI Regional FTC Robotics Competition on Saturday, March 7, 2009. The teams did an excellent job in the competition, working well with each other, as well as many schools throughout Rhode Island in order to help them succeed. The students were able to reach out to many schools in need of help, helping one school construct an entire robot from a box of parts, as well as helping them and at least seven other teams at the event to program their robots. At the end of the day, Mt. Hope Robotics once again prevailed, taking home a trophy for the FTC Connect Award. A special thanks not only to Ryan Garrity, but also to Steve Eaton and former student Geoff Hawley for helping out at the competition. We congratulate the following students who were involved in the competition from Mt. Hope:**

**David Cunha Chace Medeiros Kevin Reilly**

**Alex Curry Alex Sparfven John Hunt**

**Tyler Silva Patrick Gaudreau Tyler Cox**

**Kyle Porto Spencer Dennis Tara Alden**

**Josh King Mitchell Contente Craig Larisa**

**Jordan Sousa Keegan White-O'Brien**

**Mr. Garrity gave high praise to the students for their helpful and**

giving attitude and behavior at the competition. Dr. Mara also thanked Mr. Garrity for all the extra time he put to the project and commented that much of this success is due to his efforts.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

None

## **FUNDING FOR THE COLT ANDREWS PLAYGROUND**

The Committee invited a presentation from the Playground Committee.

**Cara Cromwell**

My name is Cara Cromwell and I'm one of the co-chairs of the Colt-Andrews Schoolyard Committee. Thank you for your service to the community and for the opportunity to update you on our committee's work and our plans for the next few months.

When I was here last year, I was looking for your support to ask permission from the town to reduce the amount of parking behind Colt School so that the schoolyard area could be larger. After that meeting, our committee worked with Mrs. McBride over the summer

and secured permission from the Planning Board and the Historic District Commission to enlarge the schoolyard and “stake back the hill” bordering Central Street.

While still trying to stay out of the contractor’s way, we spent much of the fall meeting with landscapers, engineers, teachers and parents to get an idea of what people wanted and what was feasible on the site. We are lucky to have two fathers (Ian Parker and Cliff Drawbridge) with engineering backgrounds who were able to work with existing plans (provided by Torrado) and design the concept that you have in front of you.

The new design features a flat play space, children’s gardens, an outdoor classroom, and space for playground equipment. The large grassy area is just like many folks remember from Colt Memorial High School and will serve as the space for recess and phys ed. This is critical because in the first month of school alone, the school nurses office treated 112 schoolyard injuries and these were the children that actually visited the nurse, and does not include those that were patched up on the schoolyard. There is also a smaller courtyard made of stamped concrete that can be used when the grassy area is muddy or covered in snow.

We are excited about the opportunity to make the property not just safer, but better for the children’s educational experience. We have designed a retaining wall that will also serve as an outdoor classroom

space. The children's garden that line the outside of the schoolyard will provide the opportunity for teachers to include environmental education and sustainability into the curriculum. We can also start a garden club.

I am personally excited about how changes to the schoolyard will positively impact the environment. By planting grass in place of asphalt and replacing the chain link with a natural hedge, we will reduce the amount of runoff into the harbor tremendously. We will be grading the area carefully to minimize the mud and direct water towards the gardens. And, finally, it's going to be beautiful - a little patch of green in the middle of downtown Bristol.

As you know, for a project like this, funding is key. The initial "retail" estimates we received indicated that the site work alone would be more than \$100,000. This includes ripping up and disposing of the asphalt, grading, installing the retaining wall, installing the new hedge, installing the lower courtyard and planting grass. As we've been working with contractors on friendly prices, we've also been raising money. The reality is that the Colt-Andrews community is not a wealthy one and in this economy few of our neighbors have a lot of disposable income, so we have held off on asking for direct contributions until we have a final budget in place. We have tried to focus on finding ways to make money from things that folks were already going to buy or need.

**For example:**

**o We held the holiday Bazaar and wreath sale and made close to 140 wreaths.**

**o On our website [www.coltandrews.com](http://www.coltandrews.com), purchases made through the marketplace site [www.onecause.com](http://www.onecause.com) are contributed to Colt-Andrews. For example, I've booked a hotel room, bought some books, subscribed to a magazine and bought some clothes and a percentage of each purchase was donated back to Colt-Andrews. It's a fantastic tool that one of our great Colt-Andrews dads, Greg Ehlinger, put together for us.**

**o We've partnered with 4 downtown businesses - Bristolian Pizzeria, The Toy Shop, Harbor Bath and Body and Striper Moon. On one day each week shoppers who identify themselves as supporting Colt-Andrews will have 20% of their purchases be donated to the schoolyard. Wednesday is the Toy Shop, Thursday is Bristolian Pizzeria, Saturday is Harbor Bath and Body and Sunday is Striper Moon. So if I spend \$30 at the Toy Shop on Wednesday, they will donate \$6 to the schoolyard. It's a wonderful partnership and we are so grateful to the merchants for their contributions.**

**o We are planning a Spring Fair and Flea Market. Similar to our Holiday Bazaar, we'll rent booths to local vendors and families who are looking to get rid of some "stuff."**

**We are also working to get funding from grant-making organizations and from local, state and federal entities:**

**o We are writing a number of grant and funding requests including Hasbro Children's Foundation, RWU, Nike, the Champlin Foundation, Lowe's and many more.**

**o We have already received a \$750 legislative grant from Rep. Doug Gablinske and last week the Bristol Town Council agreed to appropriate \$5000 for our efforts.**

**o I've met with Senator Whitehouse's staff and have spoken with Senator Reed and Congressman Kennedy's staff about federal appropriations for 2010 as well as stimulus money and government grants. As I told them, "we're shovel ready."**

**Our plan is to "break asphalt" shortly after school gets out and complete phase I over the summer. We have a short window of time before the children come back in the fall and we would like the site work to be done so that they have a safe place to play when school re-opens. Our plans for Phase II include installation of playground equipment and work on the children's garden. This can be done during the 2009-2010 school year with minimal disruption to the children or at the end of this summer if some of our grant money comes through. We would also like to have a safe play surface & a**

poured pervious surface iV but that may be in Phase III and summer 2010.

In the meantime, our plan is up for final review with the Historic District Commission next week and we'll be finalizing our plan with Ed Tanner and Diane Williamson at Community Development soon. They have been very helpful and are very supportive of our project.

We will of course continue to work on fundraising and grant writing so that we can complete the project sooner rather than later. We look forward to working with the School Committee and we appreciate any assistance and guidance you can provide.

Thank you.i"

Mrs. McBride asked for comments or any objections to the idea of selling plaques to be placed on the new auditorium seats. The original covers on the original seats are being stored in a vault. Mr. O'Dell felt this matter should have been taken up with the Budget Subcommittee first. Mrs. McBride explained that Mr. Silva requested it go first before the full Committee because it had been discussed at this level already, and then back to the Subcommittee. Mr. O'Dell feels the plan is wonderful but believes this discussion in the full Committee is too formal and better suited for the Subcommittee. Mrs. Arsenault commended the Playground Committee for their beautiful work and she believes selling the seat plaques is a great idea; Mrs.

Arsenault asked if the District has committed any money to the project. Mr. O'Dell explained that at a presentation of playground plans to the Budget Subcommittee in December, the Subcommittee committed \$15,000 toward the project, with the stipulation that enough money would be raised to complete the project.

Mr. Saviano is totally in favor of the project and he offered his help in any way needed. Mrs. Lynch asked the group to report back when they have more information and details, such as number of seats available and how much of a contribution would be requested for the seat plaques. Mrs. Campbell liked the plans and asked about parking spaces. Mrs. Cromwell said there are double the original parking spaces; the only hard surface in the plan is the area to the north of the building. Mrs. McBride added the Building Committee will cover the striping of the parking lot; she liked the fact that the chain link fence along the north and east sides will be replaced with bushes; the only fence to remain will be on the south side bordering the parking lot. Mrs. Cromwell said a playground surface was explored but it is very expensive; if the grass does not hold up, they will have to look into the poured surface. Mr. Brule said approval will have to be gotten also from the Bristol "town fathers" since they use the school as well; we must work together with the Town. Mrs. Cromwell explained the Town Planner and Ed Tanner have been involved in the development of the project and are thrilled with the plan. Without objection, Mr. Brule turned the project over to the Budget/Facilities Subcommittee; Mr. O'Dell said their next meeting is April 20.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

**Mrs. Campbell asked to remove the Assistant Superintendent's Report from the consent vote to clarify some algebra information.**

**MOTION: Mrs. McBride motioned to approve the remainder of the consent agenda; Mrs. Campbell seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 7 to 0.**

**MOTION: Mrs. McBride motioned to seal the minutes to the February 23 Executive Session; Mr. Saviano seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **School Committee/ School Liaisons**

**In regards to the appointments of School Committee liaisons to the schools made at the last business meeting, Mr. Brule asked Mr. Saviano to share the high school responsibilities with him as he will be spending some time in rehab over the next few weeks. Mr. Saviano accepted.**

## **BUDGET FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Mr. O'Dell said it was no surprise that Joint Finance level funded the District; our budget remains in a great deal of flux due to the situation with the State; we do not yet have a clear picture of what we have to**

work with. Mr. Brule asked that people not jump to conclusions about what is going to happen, the Committee will work it out; it was for technical reasons that 120 layoffs had to be made; nothing has been cut yet.

#### **POLICY/ COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mrs. Campbell reported the March 2nd meeting was cancelled because of the snow; the next Subcommittee meeting is March 30, 6:00 PM at Oliver, rather than April 6; on the agenda is the HIV policy, teen violence and the field trip policy to address equity; middle school staff will be present.

#### **PERSONNEL/ CONTRACT NEGOTIATION SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mr. Saviano had nothing to report at this time.

#### **FUTURE ENROLLMENT AND FACILITIES TASK FORCE**

Mrs. Lynch reported there was a meeting last week at which NESDEC gave a preliminary report on their enrollment and facilities study; there are a few issues to sort out and a special School Committee Meeting has been set for Wednesday, April 22, 6:30 PM in the Mt. Hope Cafeteria where a formal presentation will be made with time for questions and answers from the Committee and the public. Mrs.

**Lynch will send a backpack flyer out and Mrs. Campbell will advertise it in the newspapers via Bristol Voices. Mrs. Lynch asked that any questions be emailed or telephoned in to her.**

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES**

### **S2009-17 A-C: CONSENT AGENDA V PERSONNEL**

**A. APPOINTMENTS:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint the following applicants to the positions of Information Systems Coordinator and Secondary Mathematics Tutor as listed below:

**1. Sharon L. Eberlein Information Systems Coordinator**

**Effective: March 24, 2009**

**Reason: To fill a vacancy**

**Funding: Operational Budget**

**2. Rebecca E. Lowe Mathematics Tutor V Mt. Hope High**

**Effective: March 11, 2009, pending grant funding**

**Reason: To fill a new position**

**Funding: Title II Grant**

**B. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** That the School Committee

**confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint the following applicants to the extracurricular positions listed below for the 2008-09 school year only (pending certification, funding and sufficient sign-ups to warrant running these programs):**

**COACHES JV MT. HOPE HIGH**

**Sport Position Coach**

- 1. Baseball (Boys) Asst. Coach Robert Millard**

**HEALTHY HUSKIES WELLNESS CENTER/GYM AREA SUPERVISORS**

- 2. Supervisor (Spring) Ron Silva**

**C. CERTIFIED SUBSTITUTES:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to place on file in the office of the Superintendent the following applications for certified substitutes pending satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements:

**CERTIFIED**

**Name Area/Level**

- 1. Caroline J. Francis General Subject Matter**
- 2. Rebecca K. Nichols General Subject Matter**

**Recommendation #S 2009-10:** That the School Committee, upon the

**recommendation of the Superintendent and supported by the Policy/Community Affairs Subcommittee, approve the revised School Committee Policy BDDB Agenda-Meeting Format (Second Reading)**

**MOTION: Mr. O'Dell motioned to approve; Mrs. Campbell seconded. The motion to approve passed by a vote of 7 to 0.**

**Recommendation #S 2009-14: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and supported by the Policy/Community Affairs Subcommittee, approve the revised School Committee Policy JED Student Absences and Excuses (Second Reading)**

**MOTION: Mr. O'Dell motioned to approve; Mrs. Campbell seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 7 to 0.**

**Recommendation #S 2009-18: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the resolution to 1) forward a copy of the proposed amendment to the enabling legislation for the Regional District, approved June 17, 1991, to the town councils of both Warren and Bristol and ask for a Resolution from each in support of the proposed changes, and 2) that if each town council agrees with the proposed changes, the Committee will petition the general assembly to amend the Regional Agreement and**

shall seek acceptance and approval by a vote of the electors in the member towns.

**MOTION:** Mr. Saviano motioned to approve. Mrs. Campbell seconded. Mrs. Arsenault asked that, since the document is undergoing a change anyway, the term "junior high school" be stricken from Section VIII, because it is an outdated term and we are committed to the middle school concept.

Comments on the recommendation and on Mrs. Arsenault's suggestion:

„Mrs. McBride: Things have a way of coming back or going full circle, we should respect this document and make only the necessary changes; feels the ideal grade leveling is K-V 8 and 9-V 12, although we are doing good things here; the voters have the right and we need the space; if she were a parent she would want her child to go to a school in the town in which they live; she is not excited about sending a child across town lines without the consent of the parents.

„Mr. Saviano: Apprehensive about going forward with the idea of striking "junior high school" because he would hate to have to go back for a referendum because of a terminology change; we are fortunate the Town of Warren allowed us to make Hugh Cole School large enough to accommodate an extra track, it's already paid for and ready to use.

„Mr. O'Dell: This is a separate issue; our purpose is not to word-smyth or change parameters; there are concerns about opening

a „Pandora's box“ and this should be kept to a single issue; our main objective is to change how we can address the needs of the elementary students in Bristol and Warren.

„Mrs. Campbell: Agrees with Mr. O'Dell and Mrs. McBride; leaving the term in is not hurting anything and to go back would mean going through hoops of legislation; supports effort to regionalize the elementary schools, as all schools are equally high quality; there is no reason not to take advantage of the space available at Hugh Cole and give a shorter bus ride to the Bristol students living near the Warren border; voters do give permission for their children to cross town lines by voting.

„Dr. Mara: Understands Mrs. Arsenault's point to make the document reflective of the school district, but Mr. Estrella's original intent was to remove the language that prevents flexibility and he supports that.

„Mrs. Lynch: Fears opening a can of worms; disagrees that students in bordertown are closer to Hugh Cole than Rockwell; this is an issue for the voters, the fewer the issues, the easier it will be to enact; she supports the wording as is.

**MOTION:** Mrs. Arsenault motioned to table this decision until Mr. Bento and Mr. Silva can be present to weigh in; her intention is to clean up the language because legislation is a living document, but she is happy to go with the will of the Committee. No second was heard. The motion failed.

Mr. Saviano restated his motion to include “in its present form”; Mr. O’Dell seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 5 to 2 with Mrs. Arsenault and Mr. Brule opposed.

## REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT (removed from the consent vote)

Mrs. Campbell asked Mrs. Thies her plans in regards to eighth grade algebra. Mrs. Thies said the goal is proficiency and graduation so the student can go out into the public and be successful at post-secondary experiences. We know students need algebra, which is the gateway to higher level math and science and we have been working to open that gateway to more students in the past few years. At the middle level we are approaching 30% of students in Algebra I in the eighth grade, so that within two years, all students will have a full year of pre-Algebra and most a full year of Algebra I by the end of the eighth grade. The correlation is students will have a full year of Algebra in the ninth grade; one measure of that is NECAP; new state regulations include both those components. Mrs. Thies added that she is very pleased and proud of the very strong middle level math teachers, who also work with the ninth grade teachers.

Mr. Saviano, although personally very much in favor of Mrs. Thies’ pursuits, has come across research that indicates on a national level, it has in many cases caused premature failure of the children and set them up for dropping out of high school. Mrs. Thies had some of the

same concerns knowing you cannot take students who have not had the preparation and expect them to be successful in the ninth grade, and explained that this is why we start in the sixth grade and build through the seventh and eighth. Mr. Saviano asked if other districts use this approach and if they are successful. Mrs. Thies responded that Barrington and Middletown have used a similar resource; they found students did move through the levels but a good foundation must be built; we are working hard to do that.

Dr. Mara agreed with Mrs. Thies and added that “Everyday Math” introduces students at an early age to algebraic concepts; we are hoping that a strong foundation will be built as the students spiral through our curriculum and be ready in seventh or eighth grade; it is a goal of the State of RI that all students have an algebraic experience before they reach high school.

Mrs. Lynch substantiated this saying it is evidenced by what her seventh grade daughter brings home; it is great and she has been very pleased.

**MOTION:** Mrs. Campbell motioned to accept the Assistant Superintendent's Report; Mrs. Lynch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Dr. Mara announced the Rotary's annual commitment to literacy in the District this year will be "Bananagrams", a scrabble alternative, for fifth grade students at all the schools, to be given out next Wednesday. Mrs. McBride stated it is a good way to move vocabulary.

Dr. Mara informed everyone of a cyber bullying presentation to be made at the Kickemuit Middle School on Tuesday, March 24 at 6:00 PM by Dr. Fillipelli, directed to families with students in grades four through eight.

#### **ADJOURNMENT V 8:34 PM**

There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Campbell and Mr. Saviano motioned to adjourn at 8:34 PM; Mr. O'Dell seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie J. McBride, Secretary

/c